



# SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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## Mayor's Den

By Walter Behr



December and complete the job within two months. The project will start at the swimming pool bridge and extend 150-feet downstream.

Seven truckloads of rocks – larger than installed previously – will be placed on the creek banks, to repair two problem areas just downstream of the bridge. This will be followed by plantings in late winter, as soon as the ground has thawed.

Rocks will be stored in the unpaved area beyond the pool upper parking lot. They will be carried across the bridge and then placed on the creek bank.

Seven years ago, Montgomery County performed a stream bank stabilization project on 1,100-feet of the creek in an effort to protect the North Park Apartments. For several years, the Department of Environmental Protection has discussed coming back and correcting some deficiencies, but nothing happened until after a 100-year storm struck in June of last year, causing creek erosion. The current project is being financed by FEMA funds that became available after the June 2006 torrential rain.

Permits for the work have been issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mike Thompson of Biohabitats has served as engineer and environmental consultant, and the contractor is Highway and Safety Services. John Hollister is the Department

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**Your opinion is needed! Mark your Calendar to participate in the next two public meetings to plan the future of our Pool and Town Hall facilities on Monday November 26 and Monday, December 10. Both begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.**

## Calendar

Monday, November 26	Public Meeting, Facilities planning
Monday, November 26	MVA Mobile Office in Friendship Heights
Monday, December 3	Town Council Meeting
Saturday, December 8	Somerset's Community Service Day
Monday, December 10	Public Meeting, Facilities Planning
Thursday, December 13	Journal Deadline, Ads and Copy
Monday, January 7	Town Council Meeting

Don't forget to check the Town website throughout the month for an up-to-date calendar. Go to [www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com) and click on "Town Calendar"

### Mayor's Den *from page 1*

of Environmental Control engineer who has masterminded the project from the start. The County Department of Public Works and Transportation will supervise construction.

## TV Channel 16 Needs Improvement

Did you see the Somerset dog swim on our TV station, Montgomery Municipal Cable (MMC), Channel 16? I gave it a failing grade. Among other deficiencies, the entire film was so over-exposed, it looked like it was filmed by a child shooting for the first time without instruction.

If you have any ideas for improving the programming, please send them to Nat Finkelstein at the Town office. He is Somerset's representative on the MMC board. Copies will be distributed to the Council members and Mayor. It would also be of interest if you indicated how often you tune in to Channel 16 and programs you watch.

Three of the 19 member Towns in Montgomery County – Rockville, Gaithersburg and Takoma Park -- have their own television stations. MMC was established to represent the other 16 municipalities and the special taxing district of Friendship Heights. However, only 10 of the 16 and Friendship Heights are supporting the station. Somerset and seven others are sending MMC 100 percent of the franchise fees they receive from Comcast (via the County). The "seven others" are Barnesville, Brookeville, Chevy Chase Section 5, Martin's Additions, North Chevy Chase, Town of Chevy Chase and Washington Grove. Friendship Heights receives \$39,000 and passes along \$35,000 of this; Kensington pays nothing, but houses the station in its Town Hall (a former armory), rent-free. Chevy Chase Village contributes 40 percent of its payment from the County.

Six towns and villages pay nothing. They are Poolesville, Garrett Park, Chevy Chase Section 3, Chevy Chase View, Glen Echo and Laytonsville.

Somerset receives and sends to Montgomery Municipal Cable about \$11,000 a year. The payment is based on the number of Comcast houses in Town.

Should we drop out of MMC, pay only a portion of what we receive or continue to send the full amount? My preference is to continue to forward our complete payment, but do whatever we can to improve the quality of the programs at our TV station and try to get all the municipalities to join and pay their fair share.

## Sledding Is Safe in Somerset

If you are new in Town, you will be pleased to know

that after every snow-fall of

two inches

or more, a portion of Cumberland Avenue, beginning at Surrey Street, is left unplowed and is blocked off for sledding. The fun continues a second day if conditions permit.

Following are the common-sense rules, which will be posted at the top and bottom of the slope:

- Children Sledding – Drive Carefully!
- Be courteous to those who live on Cumberland.
- Respect parked cars and private property.
- Vehicles: Enter from top of hill and depart downhill.

Devon Lane becomes one-way from Cumberland to Dorset. Vehicles are not permitted to enter Devon (the alley) from Dorset since they would have to go uphill to reach most of the homes on Cumberland.

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To the extent that conditions permit, vehicles should be parked off the street. (Actually, this advice applies throughout Town so that snowplows can clear the entire street.)

Sledding on Cumberland is an old Somerset tradition. Keep it alive!



## History Committee Has Openings

If you are fascinated by the history of our century-plus-one-year-old Town, here's your chance to get involved. The five-member History Committee has two vacancies coming up. To apply for a spot, send me a brief statement of your background and interest by Thursday, December 13 ([mayor@townofsomerset.com](mailto:mayor@townofsomerset.com)).

Joan Weiss, whose term is expiring, plans to apply for another three-year stint. Ursula Dehejia will not seek another term because she is out of town so much of the time. The other members are Council member Lesley Simmons, chair; Donna Harman and Zola Schneider. I am certain that any of the committee members would be delighted to talk with you about the important work of the group.

## Permits Granted



The following permits were issued by the Mayor during the past month. (Building permits are approved by the Town Council.)

### Trees:

*Bruce and Rene Lawson*, 5502 Trent Street, to remove a huge, twin-trunk red oak in their back yard since it is leaning and the base is rotten, resulting in the possibility of falling and causing serious damage.

*Robert and Nancy Soreng*, 5506 Uppingham Street, to remove a dying cherry tree in their front yard.

*A.T. and Robin Wilder*, 5535 Warwick Place, to remove two maple trees in their back yard, one dying and the other partially rotten and leaning toward the house.

## Crime and Police Reports



By Council Member Lesley Simmons

### Crime Report

A Somerset resident has passed on news of thefts from parked cars at the Bethesda Pool parking lot. Park Police are reported to have said such thefts are a regular occurrence and that thieves watch from parked cars for an opportunity to break in and remove purses and valuables as drivers leave the vicinity.

A similar report from Norwood Park noted that a woman returned to her car with two toddlers in tow to find that in the 30 minutes she had been away from the car the glass was broken and her purse, which had been hidden from view, had been stolen.

*Always lock your car, put valuables in the trunk, and be aware of people around you. If in doubt, don't leave valuables in your vehicle.*

### Police Report

Somerset's police officer *Sherif Almiggabber* submitted the following statistics for October:

Nine citations were issued, all to non-residents, and occurring at multiple locations around Town. Two 'failure to stop at a STOP sign' warnings were given, both to Town residents. Twelve parking citations were given, all to non-residents. Officer Almiggabber also responded to one house alarm (he found all to be secure) and five miscellaneous situations, including helping a resident with a dead battery to jump start her car.

*You can help keep Somerset safe – stop at all STOP signs, adhere to our 20 MPH speed limit and be sure not to park in NO PARKING areas.*

# Town Hall Tidbits | By Tom Carter



## Office Holiday Hours

Town Hall will be closed **Tuesday, Christmas Day, December 25,**

and **Tuesday, New Year's Day, January 1,** which are Federal holidays. Tom will only be in the office sporadically between **December 21** and **January 2.** Please call first before coming to the office to be sure someone is in. The Mayor will be in Town and may be called either at home or at Town Hall. Some of the maintenance personnel will also be in, so if you need their help, please call 301-657-1992 and leave a message. One of them will return your call as soon as he gets back in the garage office.

## Administrative Assistant

Those of you who have called the office in the past month have probably already talked to our new part-time administrative assistant, *Sharon Mitchell.* Sharon comes to us from Friends & Company and lives in Baltimore. She has already grasped the intricacies of our computer accounting program to back up Tom, has been very helpful with the files for Corrie and has been handling much of the Mayor's correspondence.

## Leaf Removal

We are still vacuuming leaves and will be picking them up until the end of December.

Our machine is working great and only the rain has slowed the men.



As always, when the majority of the trees decide to drop, they do it at the same time and it is impossible to get to everyone at once. Please help us by parking in your driveways during the day so the men can get the leaf machine through. The men will try to notify owners of parked cars the day before if they have time. This is particularly important for those of you living on lower Essex Avenue, lower Trent Street and lower Warwick Place. Remember to rake your leaves to the curb, NOT into the street. You can also put them out in paper bags or reusable containers for pickup on Tuesdays by J&J.

Please remind your contractors that they cannot start blowing leaves before 9 a.m. on any day of the week.



## Yard Waste Pickup

Don't forget that yard waste will only be picked up on Tuesdays during the months of December, January and February. We do not resume Tuesday and Friday yard waste collection until March.

## Winter Storm Warning

The Town will have our snow removal contractor shovel and sand public sidewalks alongside your property for you as we have in the past. If you want help clearing your driveway or the walkway to your house, you can make arrangements with one of our young people in Town who is on the list of Odd Job Helpers.

As we do every year, we will be setting out sand for vehicles that

get stuck on our streets. Remember to get sand, kitty litter or ashes from your fireplace to spread on slippery sidewalks. If you have trouble finding sand for sidewalks, you may use the sand in the barrels. And, if you have trouble getting out to go to the store, call the Town Hall and we will find a way to get sand or kitty litter to you as soon as possible.

## Parking and Driving Courtesy

Please refrain from parking cars opposite other residents' driveways unless there are no other spaces in the vicinity. While this is a common courtesy year-round, drivers who park in these locations when the roads become slick not only inconvenience their neighbors when they are trying to back out onto the street, but also place their own vehicles in greater likelihood of damage.

If vehicles are parked illegally, call the police at 301-279-8000. You do NOT have to give your name to file a report.

As you know, our streets are narrow. Please remember that traffic on the side of the street where no parking is allowed has the right of way. That doesn't mean that courtesy doesn't work both ways. With house construction projects and curb repair work in progress, it behooves all of us to be considerate of our fellow drivers.

## MVA Mobile Office

There will be no MVA mobile service in Friendship Heights in December due to State holiday.

## 2008 Calendars

2008 League of Women Voters calendars are available at the Town Hall for \$7 or call Nancy Soreng at 301-986-1916.



## Somerset To Focus on Water Quality in Little Falls Watershed

By Council Member Marnie Shaul

Five Somerset residents (*Jeff Lape, Sarah Morse, M'Liss Reingruber, Marnie Shaul, and George Wyeth*) attended the first ever conference, Clean Water and Streams for Montgomery, sponsored by the Montgomery County Stormwater Partners. The focus of the October 27th conference was how to increase public participation in protecting our watershed (which runs into the Chesapeake Bay) and manage the stormwater that can rush into our streams.

We learned that much of the pollution in our streams is caused by stormwater runoff, which has increased over the years as more of the county has been developed and more of the pervious surface has been paved over. We learned about things we can do to improve our stream both as individuals and as a town. These include relatively simple actions such as directing downspouts so storm water can soak into the soil, planting rain gardens, and sweeping our streets regularly to reduce the pollution that can enter the stream.

An important first step to enhance Little Falls stream is to create a watershed group for our area. Sarah Morse, long-time advocate for Little Falls stream, has agreed to spearhead this effort. Sarah attended a workshop session on how to set up a watershed group. Other parts of the county have such groups and have been able to improve their watersheds. Examples are Friends of Sligo Creek and Neighbors of the Northwest Branch and Friends of Cabin John Watershed. We'll be hearing more from Sarah over the next months about what each of us can do and about actions our town might undertake to reduce stormwater runoff.

## Somerset's Community Service Day Scheduled for December 8

By Council member Jeffrey Slavin

Mark your calendars for our annual **Community Service Day**, which will take place on **Saturday, December 8** from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. This will be an excellent opportunity to once again help those less fortunate in our County during the Holiday Season.

There are a number of projects planned and all ages can participate. We will also be collecting toiletries and toothbrushes to make gift kits. The Somerset **Community Service Corps**, consisting of *David Stern, Mary*

*Geffroy, Sarah Morse and I* will be hosting this event and we are open to suggestions.

If you have project ideas or questions, please e-mail Sarah at [morsekathan@msn.com](mailto:morsekathan@msn.com). It will also be helpful to RSVP, especially if you are bringing a group. See you then.

## Residents' Letters



### Broader Coverage, Please

I am writing to encourage the Town Journal to provide better, more complete coverage of the discussion that is underway to plan the next generation of community facilities for the Town. This is important because community facilities are (or could be) an important part of the life of our Town and proposals on the table could involve a lot of money. That said, and notwithstanding two town meetings that have already been held, only a tiny portion of residents have engaged in the topic – to understand the opportunities, benefits, and alternatives we have, and to participate in influencing choices that will be made. I have my own blog, at <http://alan.proctors.us/blog>, where I'm trying to provide some of this. But I think the Town owes residents broader, better and more complete coverage of the multiple views of the issues, and the Town Journal is the traditional place for doing this.

*Alan Proctor (Cumberland)*



## On My Mind

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

The public meetings with architect Lou Balodemas have been productive in my judgement. I am pleased that we are getting down to setting some priorities and my personal vision for the Town Hall is getting clearer now, with a number of remaining questions.

For one I am still soliciting input: that is regarding the size of the all purpose room where we hold Town meetings. It seems that there is a consensus to expand that space, especially for birthday parties that can accommodate an entire class, pot lucks, movie nights and community service day. On the other hand, it appears residents don't want to increase demand just for the sake of having more events, which would greatly impact those living adjacent to the Town Hall. And living in such a developed area, there are a number of close by locations where citizens can rent space. So the question is, what types of events would you schedule (or desire) in a larger room? Let me know.

On an unrelated matter, Cumberland Ave resident Alan Proctor, always a font of good ideas, has suggested publicly that we put together a type of Town "Who's Who" directory with work and volunteer affiliations, expanded contact information, and perhaps even educational qualifications and photos. The directory could help us get to know each other better, increase our ability to network and take advantage of small town bonding.

Such a directory would entail a lot of work, requiring a number of volunteers. I think this would be a nice addition to our Town's publications, but I am wondering – before undertaking this project – how many of you would use such a directory and what specific information you would like to see included. You know where to reach me, and you can contact Alan, too, on his blog at <http://alan.proctors.us/blog>.

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## County News

### New Brochure Reminds Kids How to Exit Buses Safely

Ride On's new safety brochure reminds children and teens that the rules for exiting public transit buses are different from school buses.

When school bus riders exit, they should cross in front of the waiting school bus. But, passengers exiting Ride On or Metro buses should cross the street only after the bus has pulled away.

Get your brochure through Ride On's Transit Information Center 240-777-7433. More pedestrian safety tips at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/walk](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/walk)



### Nominees Sought

Nominees are sought for the County's 2008 **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian and Children of the Dream Awards**. Awards will be presented at the *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration* at the Music Center at Strathmore on **January 21, 2008**. For information visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov) and type "King awards" in the search box.

# Odds and Ends

## Critical Blood Shortage in Bethesda

The NIH blood bank is urgently seeking type O blood donors. Local and regional supplies of blood type O are dangerously low, according to the NIH. Type O blood is the only type that can be transfused to patients with other blood types. For more information go to: [http://www.gazette.net/stories/110707/beth-new55347\\_32362.shtml](http://www.gazette.net/stories/110707/beth-new55347_32362.shtml)



## Disney's Beauty and the Beast Starts at BCC High School on November 30th!

Don't miss BCC High School's fall musical, the magically delightful story of Disney's Beauty and the Beast. The show, which will appeal to all – from pre-school to retirement, will be on November 30, December 1, 7 and 8 at 7:30 p.m. and a special family matinee, featuring tea with Mrs. Potts, Chip and Belle and photo-ops with all the actors will be on December 2 at 2:00 p.m. Show times and tickets at <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/bcchs/performingarts/theater/tickets.html>

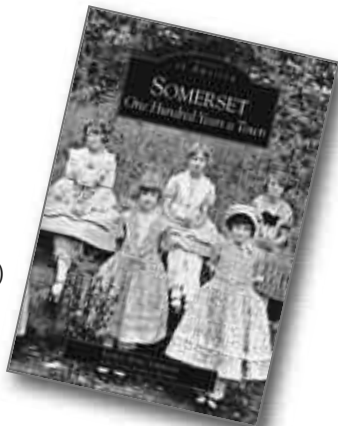
Questions? Sally Kelly [salkelly@earthlink.net](mailto:salkelly@earthlink.net)

## Community Emergency Response Training (Cert)

Montgomery County is looking for proactive citizens interested in becoming Community Safety Advocates and front-line assistants during large emergencies. Information at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/firtmpl.asp?url=/Content/FireRescue/sion/cert/index.asp>

## Centennial Memorabilia

Somerset centennial t-shirts (\$10 ea.), mugs (\$8 ea.) and history books "Somerset: 100 Years A Town" (\$20 ea.) still available from the Town Hall.



## B-CC Rescue Squad Launches Newsletter

Sign up for the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad's new free e-mail newsletter featuring news of upcoming events and fire/rescue and safety information of interest to the community. With 150 professionally trained volunteers and a daytime staff, BCCRS responds to almost 11,000 emergency medical, rescue and fire calls every year in the greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. Sign up for the newsletter at [www.bccrs.org](http://www.bccrs.org)

## Consumer Protection

Montgomery County's Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) has issued a report which found that 51 percent of the 136 limousine firms listed in the Montgomery County "Yellow Pages" telephone directory are not licensed with the Public Service Commission and 88 percent are not licensed with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission. Information at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ocptmpl.asp?url=/content/ocp/index.asp>

## Holiday Giving Project

The Montgomery County Volunteer Center is the central coordinating agency for the County's Holiday Giving Project, a coordinated effort of volunteers from community organizations that collect food and toy donations and distribute them to needy families during the Thanksgiving and December holiday season. More than 7,000 families were served in 2006. Information at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/Content/Volunteer/holiday2007.asp>





## Classified Ads



### Services

**PIANO & FLUTE LESSONS** (with THEORY). Cecelia Porter, Ph.D., musicologist. Washington Post music critic. 301-654-2165.

**ACADEMIC TUTOR:** 20 years experience teaching all ages, subjects. Math through Algebra II. Reading comprehension and writing. Test preparation, organizational/study skills. M.A. in Biology and Special Ed. Call Sheryl Gilbert, 301- 656-1753.

### Miscellaneous

**SOMERSET BOOK GROUP** that meets monthly is seeking additional members. We are an eclectic group. We have read novels that take place in foreign countries, historical fiction, biographies, autobiographies and a number of books that have won various literary awards. If you would like to join us, call Ilene at 301-656-8136.

**GARAGE SPACE NEEDED** to store a 1990 Jaguar from January through April or possibly long term. Call 301-986-9343.

**SOMERSET HOME FOR RENT.** 4 bedroom, 3 full bath, sunroom, carport. Available now: \$3,800/month. Call Georganne, 304-763-4287 (H) or 304-673-0332.

*Ads are printed as a courtesy to Town residents. The Town makes no representations as to quality, safety or otherwise regarding the goods and services advertised. Readers should make their own inquiries. To place an ad, submit typed or neatly printed copy to the Clerk-Treasurer. Ads must include a Somerset phone number.*

**Price:** \$5 per advertisement per issue. Check or exact change. 50-word limit per advertisement.



### When You Need a Helping Hand

If you become sick or have an accident, or for some reason need a little help, call on Somerset's Helping Hand volunteers who can run an errand, give you a ride to a doctor's appointment or otherwise help out in an emergency.

Call Zola Schneider at: 301 654-7481 or 301 654-5889.



# Legislation

## At the November 5 meeting, the Council:

Approved the renewal of Town snow removal contract for the 2008-2010 seasons.



# Council Activity

## At the November 5 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Heard the independent auditor's report for fiscal year 2007 presented by Jim Lindsey of Lindsey & Associates.
2. Approved the transfer of \$6,500 from General Fund Contingency to General Fund Leaves for FY08.
3. Confirmed the Mayor's appointment of Ann Brown to a two-year term on the Special Events Committee and a one-year term as chair and reappointment of Bonnie Lewin, Barbara Marblestone and Sarah Morse to two-year terms.
4. Set the date of the September 2008 Council meeting for Tuesday, September 2.
5. Approved the contract of Luis Ezequiel to install curbs on both sides of Devon Lane at a cost of \$16,450.
6. Discussed with Town Attorney Norman Knopf the responsibility of the Town for storm water runoff on private property. A new County law addresses water drainage for new building permit applications, but does not apply to older development.
7. Discussed the application for transfer of a special exception for an accessory apartment at 5523 Uppingham to a contract purchaser and moved to request a hearing before the County Board of Appeals.
8. Approved the removal of Town tree #443, a dead Japanese maple located at 4815 Grantham Avenue.
9. Approved the renewal of our snow removal contract with Mulheron Tree Experts for the 2008-2010 seasons.
10. Approved a permit for Katherine Borsechnik and Eugene Weil to remove four damaged Leyland cypress trees on the east side of their lot.

# Preliminary Agenda

## Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, December 3, 2007 – 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of the November 5 regular meeting – 7:30 p.m.
2. Discussion of financial report – 7:35 p.m.
3. Confirmation of Mayor's appointment of John Sullivan to Board of Supervisors of Elections for a three-year term expiring December 31, 2010 – 7:40 p.m.
4. Action setting dates for nomination and election of Mayor and two Council members for two-year terms (suggested dates: nominations, Monday, March 3; election, Tuesday, April 1) – 7:45 p.m.
5. Discussion of closing Cumberland Avenue on Halloween – 7:50p.m.
6. Action on tennis fees for 2008 – 8:00 p.m.
7. Mayor's report – 8:05 p.m.
8. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:15 p.m.
9. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:25 p.m.
10. Discussion of Swimming Pool Committee's proposed budget for 2008 season – 8:35 p.m.
11. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Steven Guttentag and Stacy Winick, 5608 Warwick Place, to add a screened porch to the back of their house – 8:45 p.m.
12. Introduction of Town Code amendment to require invisible fences for pet containment to be installed at least three feet from Town sidewalks and curbs and increase penalties for violation of animal control requirements from \$50 to \$100 for a first offense and from \$100 to \$300 for each repeat offense – 8:50
13. New business – 8:55 p.m.
14. Adjournment – 9:00 p.m.

This is a preliminary agenda prepared to meet the Journal press deadline, which typically is two weeks prior to the next Town Council meeting. During this period there will likely be changes to the timing of items, and some items may be added or deleted. Please consult the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch or the Town web site for the most up-to-date agenda.

Residents who wish to be present for a particular agenda item are advised to arrive 15 minutes ahead of the item's scheduled discussion time as discussion sometimes run ahead of schedule.

November 2007



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**TOWN HALL**

Open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. — Monday thru Friday  
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TTY users call Maryland Relay

*This issue edited by Lesley Simmons*